

Application No. 09/684,898
Amendment dated November 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 7, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-13, 15, 17 and 19-34 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 5, 12, 20, 23 and 26-28 are herein amended. New claims 31-34 are herein added. Reconsideration of the rejections in view of the amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-13, 15, 17 and 19-30 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hasegawa et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,871,587)

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. The Examiner alleged as follows:

The limitations on which the Applicant relies on (as stated above), are not found in the independent claims. In fact, independent claim (for example claim 1) stated that "in such a manner that the environment of **at least a portion on** a side of said exposure apparatus becomes **the same as the environment of at least a portion on a side** of said substrate processing apparatus". In the Examiner's opinion, the meaning, breadth, and scope of "the environment of **at least a portion on a side**", as recited in the claims of the present application is not even close to "controlling in such a way that an **environment level in one chamber** to become **the same as the environment level of another chamber**", as argued. Further, the rejection here is made under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), Hasegawa meets the limitations of the claimed invention since Hasegawa suggests that the helium purity of the exposure apparatus (apparatus A) is adjusted to be **not lower than 99.9%** based on the purity of the helium detected from the substrate processing apparatus (apparatus B) (see col.5, lines 48-56).

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Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a control device electrically connected to the environment sensor, said control device controlling the environment in said at least the other of the first and the second chambers on the basis of a measured value given from said environment sensor in such a manner that the environment of ~~at least a portion on a side of~~ one of said substrate processing apparatus and said exposure apparatus becomes the same as the environment of ~~at least a portion on a side of said substrate processing apparatus~~ the other apparatus." Claims 1, 5, 12, 20, 23 and 26-28 also have been amended to delete "of at least a portion."

Hasegawa et al discusses nothing about a control in such a manner that the environment in one chamber becomes the same as the environment in another chamber.

Therefore, Hasegawa does not teach or suggest the recitations of the independent claims.

The examiner fails to show the reason why Hasegawa ('587)'s art which discloses "an environment in an apparatus A is adjusted to be not lower than 99.9% based on the measured result on another environment of another apparatus B" render obvious the present invention which makes an environment of an apparatus A to become the same as another environment of another apparatus B.

Furthermore, while the Office Action alleged that the helium purity of the exposure apparatus (apparatus A) is adjusted to be not lower than 99.9% based on the purity of the helium detected from the substrate processing apparatus (apparatus B) " (lines 13 to 15, page 3 and lines 7 to 9, page 5), Hasegawa et al. does not disclose as the Office Action indicated.

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In Hasegawa ('587), a purity sensor 110 for detecting helium purity is provided at an evacuation line from a second chamber 130, not in the second chamber 130. In other words, the purity sensor 110 does not detect the helium purity in the second chamber 130 (i.e. in an apparatus B, that is a substrate processing apparatus of the subject invention) but merely detects the helium purity in the evacuation line.

Thus, Hasegawa ('387) fails to disclose an invention having two chambers A and B where an environment in the chamber A is controlled or adjusted so as to become the same as another environment of the chamber B.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 1, 5, 12, 20, 23, 26-28 patentably distinguish over Hasegawa et al., claims 2-5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29 and 30, depending from one of these independent claims, also patentably distinguish over Hasegawa et al.

Thus, the 35 USC §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

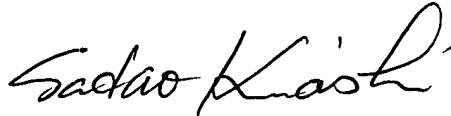
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If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sadao Kinashi", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sadao Kinashi

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